

# STANDING OUR HOLY GROUND

A YEAR-LONG LOOK AT **GUN VIOLENCE** & WHAT THE FAITH COMMUNITY CAN DO ABOUT IT

## Study Guide

### Get Your Guns: Why Americans Buy Firearms in Times of Pandemic

#### Timestamps

##### Opening Remarks

[1:19](#) - Common Understandings

[4:20](#) – Laurie Kraus, Director, [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#)

[5:31](#) – Robert Hoggard, Pastor & PhD student, Rochester, NY

[7:18](#) - Statistical Context of Gun Sales During the COVID-19 Pandemic

##### Q&A

[11:32](#) – Why do people stockpile ammunitions and weapons in times of crisis/pandemic?

[16:31](#) – What is the distinction between fear-based and faith-based responses to crisis/disaster? Are there lessons from lent or Easter that are relevant during this time?

[26:05](#) – What are the real and theological implications of isolation in times of pandemic? How did Jesus model isolation as a spiritual practice?

[34:40](#) – How does the current pandemic amplify the major issues that intersect with gun violence?

[39:12](#) How can faith communities respond to COVID-19 in ways that ensure the care of vulnerable and marginalized communities?

[44:01](#) – Is the phenomenon of stockpiling guns unique to the US or is it happening other places around the world?

[44:40](#) – How can we address the irony of gun shops being essential and churches being non-essential?

[48:20](#) – How much does racist rhetoric, either subtle or more overt, play in the stockpiling of weapons?

[51:10](#) - Do you foresee spikes in gun violence death suicides due to unemployment and depression? Why might youth be turning to violence in these times?

#### Helpful References

Statistics on Gun Sales: [New York Times](#), [USA Today](#), [WTOC](#)

[For the Sake of Peace: Africana Perspectives on Racism, Justice, and Peace in America](#)

[Recovering from Un-Natural Disasters: A Guide for Pastors and Congregations after Violence and Trauma](#)  
[Presbyterian Peacemaking Program](#)

[Presbyterian Peace Fellowship](#)

[Standing Our Holy Ground Webinar Series](#)



## General Questions

1. How did this webinar engage your **mind**? What thoughts came to mind as you heard from the panelists?
2. How did this webinar engage your **heart**? What emotions and feelings did you experience while hearing from the panelists?
3. How did this webinar speak to your **soul**? What spiritual wonderings emerged while listening to the panelists?

## Guided Questions

1. How have you and others around you responded to the fears surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic or similar situations? Would you describe your response as faith-based or fear-based?
2. Both panelists state that people are purchasing firearms because of fear. Laurie Kraus adds that people of privilege are not used to *“living in the valley of the shadow”* with *“continuing fear that we have no power over”* and the need to learn from marginalized communities, such as people of color, who have had to live with such discomfort and fear for their entire lives. With this in mind, how do you interpret the armed protests and demonstrations in various state capitals demanding that the state government re-open all businesses and resume operations? What are the fears these protestors are trying to assuage with armed demonstrations? Consider the appropriateness of an armed response to those fears.
3. The panelists discuss a variety of creative ways that faith communities can ensure that the marginalized and vulnerable are taken care of in times of pandemic. How is your congregation trying to help marginalized people in your community? With whom are you or could you be partnering? What else could be done?
4. Laurie Kraus noted that when Jesus self-isolated he faced similar challenges to those faced by people in isolation due to COVID-19. He faced mental challenges, isolation, and fear of being out of control. He dealt with temptations regarding protecting himself from scarcity and securing his power in a time of loneliness and deprivation. Laurie stated that *“maybe if Jesus were offered the choice today, securing power by guns might be the question.”* How do you think Jesus would respond to such a temptation? How would his response compare to our own?
5. Robert Hoggard stated that we need our governments to govern based on who is in need, rather than who needs to be controlled. What do you think this would look like? How would our society function differently?
6. Both panelists discuss how a fear of the “other” is used to distract people from the real issues that plague our society. Often the “other” is marginalized communities, people of color, and immigrants and other nations. People then buy weapons to protect themselves from the “other”. Where do you see this fear employed? Who do you see using it?

